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## VISUALS FOR TV

### Visual aids are not new!

With the birth of television, we have heard a lot about visual aids--one might even think that they grew up together.

Actually, there is nothing new about visuals. They make use of sight... a basic means of learning. A baby learns by observing long before he can either speak or read. We have evidences of communication through visual media from as far back as the Stone Age. We know this from studying the stone carvings which are still in existence. And "seeing is believing"....a proverb known throughout the world!

### Why Visualize?

All people see alike. A picture of a cow means something to anyone familiar with the animal, but the word either written or spoken can be understood only by people of the same language.

We have heard the old Chinese proverb "one picture is worth 10,000 words." Do we have evidence that even an approximation of this is true? We do know that the retention of a lecture goes from about 60% at the time of exposure down to about 20% three weeks later. When visuals are used, the effectiveness of these lectures has been increased four times. The influx of picture magazines in the last few years indicates that illustrating is not only an effective way of presenting information but a popular one as well.

The reasons for the effectiveness of visualizing can be traced to these characteristics:

1. They hold attention
2. They create interest
3. They increase understanding
4. They increase retention

A somewhat incidental effect of visualizing has been that it gives the person renewed interest by giving him a new way of presenting his material.

### TV is a visual medium

We aren't concerned with the question of whether to visualize or not, but how can we do it most effectively.

There are several general principles we should keep in mind.

First, the television screen is in the proportion of four to three, on the horizontal plane, and visuals should approach that same proportion.

Second, visuals must be kept simple. The viewer is concentrating his attention on a relatively small area--his television screen--and a simple one, two, three presentation is going to be more effective than one that confuses him.

Third, we are still concerned mainly with black and white television so your visual should not be based on color. The camera will pick up colors only as tones of grey.

Fourth, lighting in the TV studio will cause annoying reflections unless dull surfaces are used. Also, black and white used next to each other will cause halo effects which can be disconcerting.

#### What to use

Don't try to invent an artificial visual if there is an opportunity to use the actual object. They are usually easier to obtain, look more authentic than any model or graphic, are familiar to the viewer, and don't detract as in the case of gadgets. If you are talking about pigs, use a live pig--about soil, use samples of soil--dress construction, show the actual dress.

Motion pictures, if obtainable, can be as effective as a live studio presentation. In fact, they can be more effective in cases where the situation cannot be duplicated in the studio. From the standpoint of the viewer, it is no different than a kinescope of a studio presentation. Film clips--short sequences from a movie--are often used. Movies incorporate motion and sound and have the additional benefit of condensing time and space.

Models should be considered when the actual object is either impractical or impossible to bring into the studio. Models are usually thought of as being a reduced scale version of the real thing, but in some cases it might be desirable to show an enlarged version. They can be taken apart to show interior construction and can be animated to produce desired effects. Such animation should, however, not detract from the message you are trying to get across. Don't overlook toys as a good source of models.

A live graphic is a graphic presentation built up step by step in front of the viewer. It conveys the impression that you are building the story especially for him and allows him to follow you more easily.

If you are artistically inclined or have simple facts and figures to present, you can use a newsprint pad and a wax pencil, colored chalk, or fountain brush pen.

The old standby, the chalkboard, should not be overlooked. Notice that we refer to it as a chalkboard since it is not black! A green board and yellow chalk will not produce the halo effect that results from using white chalk on a blackboard. A simple and inexpensive chalkboard can be made by painting the smooth side of a piece of tempered masonite with green chalkboard paint.

If you don't want to take the time necessary to write or draw your message in front of the viewer, a "strip tease" can be used. Cover each point with a strip of wrapping paper and reveal them one by one by peeling off the strips at the appropriate time.

A flannelgraph works on the principle that cutouts backed with flannel, felt, coarse sandpaper or suede paper will adhere to the flannel. A piece of cotton flannel stretched tightly over a smooth surface will serve as the basic surface. If a dark colored flannel is used, it will not show soil easily, and light colored cutouts will show up well.

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Your cutouts can be magazine illustrations, construction paper silhouettes or simple line drawings. The newer suede papers are not as bulky as cutouts backed with sandpaper and you will also gain more uniform adhesion. Experience with napped rubber sheeting shows that the cutouts do not curl up.....a characteristic of some of the other methods.

A ferriergraph has a tab built in which permits you to simulate action by having lines, figures or illustrations pop into view. It is particularly suited to TV because the tab can be pulled "off camera." The cover and tab should be made of fairly heavy stock. If a dark matte surface is used, there will be less tendency for the camera to pick up the cutout portions on the cover. A light colored back cover will also show up well through the openings when the tab is pulled.

Perforated hardboards used extensively for store displays offer a versatile background panel for TV use. Holes spaced either one-half inch or one inch apart enable you to use wire hooks, golf tees, or paper fasteners for showing pictures, charts, and posters. A series of fixtures are available for use as shelf brackets, literature holders, garment hooks, easels, etc.

Hinged sections of perforated hardboard in units of 36" x 48" enable you to build up display units of various sizes to fit the occasion.

We speak of a static graphic when we are referring to something prepared beforehand that is shown to the audience. It is usually in the form of a picture, chart, or poster.

Still pictures should be at least 8 by 10 inches and mounted on cards to keep them straight. A matte or semi-matte finish is essential to reduce reflections. They should be horizontal rather than vertical, and care should be taken to be sure they show the details desired. As a rule, closeups will prove the most satisfactory.

Slides are being widely used. Both black-and-white and colored slides can be used. You will want to check with your station relative to mounting also, since many can use only certain kinds of metal mounts. Remember that a slide is static and in order to insure movement a fairly rapid pace should be maintained.....four to six per minute.

Materials are available which enable you to type your message on thin plastic by means of carbon paper or to use a pencil to put it on frosted acetate. By mounting either type in a glass mount, you have an inexpensive slide that can be quickly produced.

Charts and posters are commonly used on TV. Regardless of the way in which they are used, be sure to keep them simple! One idea per poster and one comparison per chart is desirable. Other factors to consider are: large and bold lettering, few words, well centered subject matter, and large enough margins to enable the camera to frame the information properly. Light grey or buff cards with black lettering prove satisfactory.

#### Use them properly

The effectiveness of your TV presentation is going to depend largely on your choice and use of visuals. Pick only those necessary to get your points across.....there is such a thing as overdoing it.

Insure constant movement throughout the program. A program properly visualized should get across the message even if the sound should happen to be turned off.

Think of visual aids as your outline in presenting your show. Select them wisely, arrange them logically and show them properly.....you will have an effective program.





